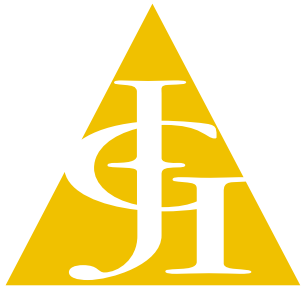


CJI Planning Survey

1999

Highlights And Findings





I N D I A N A
CRIMINAL JUSTICE
I N S T I T U T E

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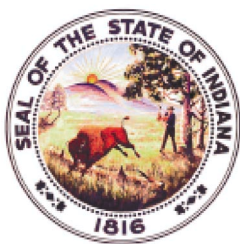
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About the Indiana Criminal Justice Institute

Guided by a Board of Trustees representing all components of Indiana's criminal and juvenile justice systems, the Indiana Criminal Justice Institute serves as the state's public safety planning agency. The Institute develops long-range strategies for the effective administration of Indiana's criminal and juvenile justice systems and administers federal and state funds to carry out these strategies.

The Institute oversees a variety of justice programs including the Governor's Criminal Law Study Commission, Governor's Commission for a Drug-Free Indiana, Governor's Council on Impaired & Dangerous Driving, Victim Services, Juvenile Justice Program, Safe Haven, Drug and Crime Control Program, Criminal History Records Improvement, Law Enforcement Assistance Fund, and Police Corp.

To carry out the Institute's planning and administration mandates, the Institute's Board of Trustees identifies statewide needs and resources for fighting crime and delinquency and helping victims of crime. Information gathered from various sources is used to develop statewide criminal and juvenile justice policies and strategic plans. Sources of planning information include the following:

- Evaluations of program effectiveness;
- Research data;
- Needs assessments;
- Local units of government;
- Other state government agencies;
- Professionals involved in justice-related efforts; and
- Concerned citizens.

Indiana's 1999 Strategic Planning Survey (the Survey) serves as an important source of information for criminal and juvenile justice planning in the early years of the new millennium. The Survey captures and quantifies the experience and knowledge of more than 1,500 professionals working in criminal and juvenile justice across the state. This publication presents Survey findings and describes what we learned from this research initiative conducted in the summer of 1999.

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Survey Purpose, Methods, Highlights

Purpose

Indiana's 1999 Strategic Planning Survey (the Survey) was conducted to aid in developing and implementing statewide strategies for combating drug and violent crime and preventing juvenile delinquency. As indicated in the following excerpt from the Survey cover letter, the purpose of the Survey was to obtain information on local criminal and juvenile justice problems, needs, and resources from the perspective of professionals working in all major components of Indiana's justice system:

The Indiana Criminal Justice Institute . . . is conducting a survey of state criminal/juvenile justice practitioners to better understand the current needs, problems, and concerns of Indiana communities. . . . Based on your experience as the head of a key part of the criminal/juvenile justice system in your community, we have selected you to represent the perspective of that component of the justice system. Your responses to the questionnaire are needed to ensure the validity of this survey.

Methods

Respondents. For this investigation the Institute sampled twelve groups of professionals working in criminal and juvenile justice positions. As shown in the table on the following page, the sample included professionals in all areas of Indiana's criminal and juvenile justice systems, including town marshals, police chiefs, sheriffs, prosecutors, public defenders, trial court judges, chief probation officers, community correction program directors, detention center directors, jail commanders, Local Coordinating Council (LCC) Chairs/Co-Chairs, selected Institute grantees, and the Institute's Board of Trustees. (LCCs are volunteer coalitions of citizens and organizations that prepare comprehensive plans addressing substance abuse and safe driving issues in their communities.)

The Institute obtained lists of administrators in each of the twelve groups and entered the names into a mailing list database. Our goal was to obtain the voluntary participation of each administrator in each group. For example, we sampled only chief probation officers not all probation officers.

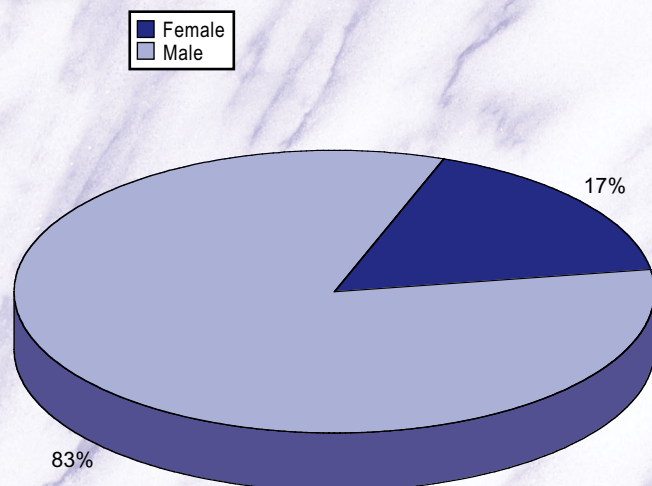
As a check on the accuracy of our sampling, the Survey asked respondents to identify their current professional position. Seventy-three respondents did not fit into one of the groups targeted for this study. The group labeled “Other” accounts for these respondents. Respondents in this group include, for example, former prosecutors, deputy sheriffs, and assistant police chiefs.

Sampled Groups and Response Rates

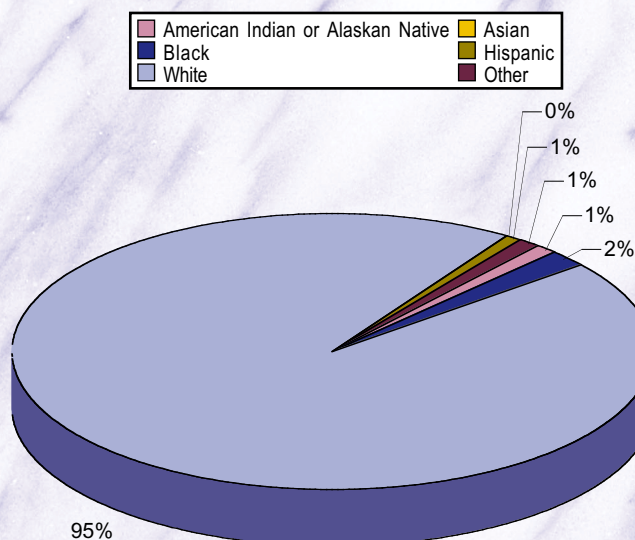
Group	Number Surveyed	Number Returned	Percent Returned
Town Marshals and Police Chiefs	452	332	73%
Sheriffs	91	70	77%
Prosecutors	90	71	79%
Public Defenders	89	44	49%
Trial Court Judges	271	187	69%
Chief Probation Officers	141	113	80%
Community Correction Program Directors	53	36	68%
Detention Center Directors	18	13	72%
Jail Commanders	92	54	59%
Local Coordinating Council Chairs/Co-Chairs	80	36	45%
Selected Institute Grantees	158	96	61%
Institute Board of Trustees	13	10	77%
Other	N/A	73	N/A
Total	1,548	1,135	73%

As the table shows, response rates ranged from a low of 45% for LCCs to a high of 80% for chief probation officers. Overall, 73% or 1,135 of the 1,548 people surveyed completed and returned the questionnaire. This high response rate suggests that, as intended, our sample is representative of professionals in leadership roles throughout Indiana’s criminal and juvenile justice systems. However, we do not assume that the perspectives of all group members (e.g., all police officers) are represented by the responses of selected group leaders (e.g., police chiefs).

Sex of Respondents



Race of Respondents



As the pie charts here show, respondents were predominantly male, white, between the ages of 36 and 55, and highly educated. Four of every 10 respondents had a graduate school degree. As a group, respondents had worked an average of 13 years in their current positions (median = 11 years, range = 1-40 years; not shown). Seventy-eight percent reported that they work with both juveniles and adults. Fifteen percent work only with adults and 7% work only with juveniles (not shown).

Instrument. The Institute developed the Survey using focus meetings, literature reviews, and information provided by other criminal and juvenile justice professionals. The questionnaire consisted of thirty-five questions addressing the following topics:

- a. The age groups of people committing crimes in communities;
- b. Juvenile offenses creating the largest drain on community resources;
- c. Juvenile offenses involving illegally obtained firearms;
- d. Factors contributing to juvenile delinquency;
- e. Representation of minority youth in the juvenile justice system;
- f. Adult offenses creating the largest drain on community resources;
- g. Adult offenses involving illegally obtained firearms;
- h. The availability of programs for dealing with drug problems;
- i. The most commonly abused controlled substances;
- j. The presence of gangs in communities;
- k. The value of various approaches for fighting delinquency and crime;
- l. The availability, effectiveness, and sufficiency of resources for justice programs;
- m. The most effective programs for dealing with crime and delinquency;
- n. Programs respondents would implement to meet the needs of their communities;
- o. The completeness, accuracy, and timeliness of criminal history records;
- p. The availability of justice information systems;
- q. Criminal history information needs; and
- r. Respondent characteristics.

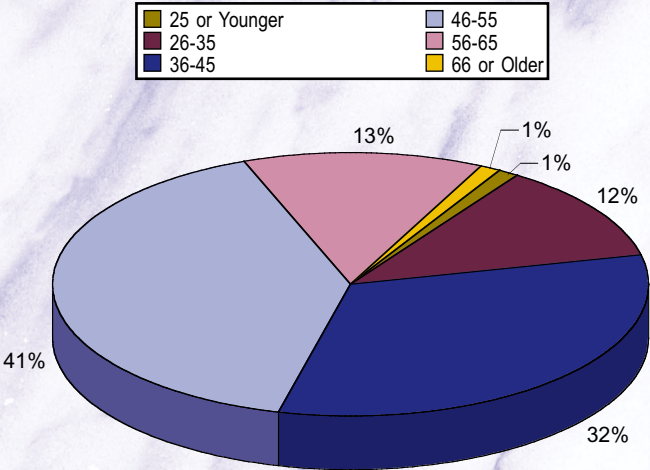
The Survey posed most questions in a fixed-choice format and the remainder in an open-ended format. Later in this document, questions and instructions are reproduced as they appeared in the Survey. The final survey document was professionally printed in an 11 x 17 color format designed for ease of use by respondents.

Procedure. On May 17, 1999, the Institute mailed postcards announcing the coming Survey to all individuals selected for inclusion in the study. To enhance product recognition and responsiveness to the Survey, the 5 x 7 postcards were thematically related to the questionnaire and the envelope in which it was mailed. On May 20, 1999, the Institute mailed the Survey and a cover letter from the Governor’s office with a request that the Survey be completed and returned to the Institute by June 7, 1999 in its enclosed self-addressed, postage pre-paid envelope.

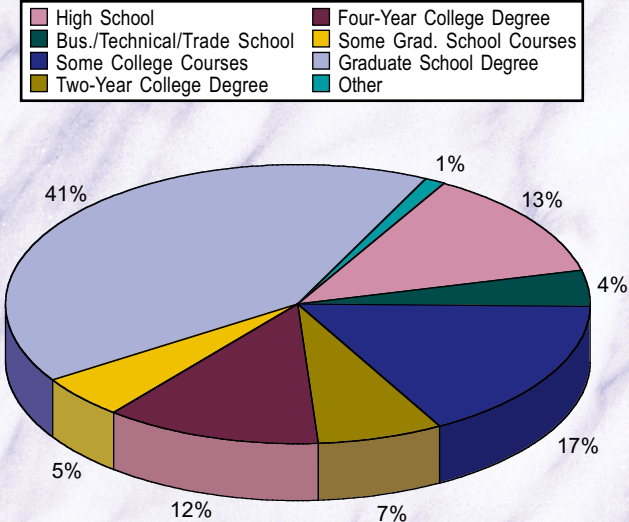
Tracking labels linking individual questionnaires with individual respondents were affixed to the back of each questionnaire to permit follow-up with late or non-respondents. Respondents were instructed not to put their names on the Survey itself so that confidentiality could be maintained. The Institute securely maintained the list linking tracking numbers and individual names and used it only to track whether the Survey had been returned. On June 12, 1999, Institute staff began making follow-up telephone calls to late and non-respondents to encourage them to return the Survey at their earliest possible convenience. On July 15, 1999, the Institute mailed second copies of the Survey, cover letter, and return envelope to remaining non-respondents, covered by a bulletin informing them that the Institute had not received their completed Survey and indicating the percent of people in their targeted group that had responded to date.

Survey data were entered and managed in a Microsoft Access database, and exported to SPSS for statistical analysis. Research Division staff supervised data entry and verification, and analyzed the data.

Age of Respondents



Education Level of Respondents



Highlights

This document presents overall findings for all of the core questions in the Survey. Highlights from the observations, perceptions, and opinions of experienced justice professionals throughout Indiana include the following:

- Although they are not the most frequent or the most serious offenders, youth aged 15-17 present a considerable drain on community resources for dealing with crime and delinquency;
- Very few crimes committed by juveniles and adults involve illegally obtained firearms;
- Four in ten respondents agreed that organized gangs are present in their communities, but there was not strong consensus about how much the presence of gangs or gang activity contributes to juvenile delinquency;
- Most respondents did not believe that minority juveniles are overrepresented in the juvenile justice system relative to their proportion in the population at large (minority representation in Indiana's juvenile justice system is the subject of a coming study);
- The majority of respondents identified cocaine, crack cocaine, and marijuana as the most commonly abused controlled substances in their communities – nearly half reported that amphetamines and methamphetamine also are commonly abused substances;
- Most respondents chose concentrating efforts on education/prevention and issues affecting families/children as the most valuable approaches for fighting delinquency and crime – roughly a third ranked improving the criminal/juvenile justice system, enhancing police investigation and enforcement, providing counseling and treatment for offenders, and providing education and training for offenders among the top five most valuable approaches;

- A third of all respondents would implement programs that focus on prevention and education to meet the needs of their communities;
- Although most of the commonly known justice programs are available in local communities, few respondents thought that these programs are highly effective; and
- When asked to list the most effective program for dealing with crime and delinquency, more respondents listed prevention and education programs or community-based alternative sanctions than any other type of program.

When considering these findings, it is important to note that the purpose of this report is to descriptively present overall Survey results, not to comprehensively explain and interpret each finding. The analyses here do not control for the effects of group membership, such as type of profession, or the influence of intervening variables, such as county population and the demographic and economic makeup of communities, on respondent answers. For example, respondents' professions may influence their views on whether particular justice programs are highly effective. Similarly, responses to questions about minority representation in the juvenile justice system may vary depending on the racial composition of the communities where respondents work. Thus, Survey findings presented in this report do not address factors that may influence different views and experiences among individual groups of justice professionals. Nonetheless, the information presented here provides insight into local justice problems, needs, and resources from the perspective of professionals in all major components of Indiana's criminal and juvenile justice systems.

Acknowledgments

We thank all of the individuals whose contributions made this study possible, particularly the justice professionals throughout Indiana who took the time to complete and return the Survey.



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